

Regular Stakes doubles as Kosovo train-up



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

A soldier radios a Black Hawk helicopter for extraction from a training area just outside of St. Wendel.



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Soldiers from 1-6 Infantry negotiate the weave during the obstacle course portion of the Regular Stakes competition.

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs office

Each year, 1-6 Infantry runs a high stakes competition to determine who has bragging rights as the best rifle squad in the battalion. Nine squads took part in this year's event, known as Regular Stakes, in which the stakes are anything but regular.

Regular Stakes is a competition among the rifle squads that measures the ability of squad leaders and team leaders to control their soldiers. The competition is called "Regular" because the soldiers of 1-6 Infantry are, "Regulars by God," and "stakes" because of its competitive nature.

When it was all over, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon from Alpha 1-6 Infantry was selected as the top squad in the battalion.

This year, the competition doubled as "train-up" for 1-6 Infantry's upcoming deployment to Kosovo.

It all began with the Army physical fitness test at "0 dark 30" and then it was off to the obstacle course where each squad teamed up to complete 17 stations as one unit. Weapons disassembly and reassembly and weapons qualification followed. After that, they faced a 12-mile foot march under modestly warm conditions. A brief break after

the march to rehydrate, count foot blisters and sour and it was off to the various hands on activities. There, they conducted tasks similar to those performed for Common Task Training and Expert Infantry Badge qualification, but it wasn't over. The weary and dusty soldiers ended the day with a written exam that gauged their mental ability and concentration.

After piling into Black Hawk helicopters at the Idar-Oberstein Airport the following day, the nine squads were flown to their objectives southwest of Baumholder near St. Wendel, where they completed the tactical portion of the competition. Under the watchful eye of the land owners who agreed to allow 1-6 Infantry to use their land, they performed tactical tasks ranging from a raid to issuing an op order. One by one the squads completed their objective and radioed the choppers for extraction from the site.

The blast from the Black Hawk rotors flattened the knee high grass as they approached the landing site and quickly settled on the ground. The soldiers scurried on board and within seconds each squad was whisked back to Idar-Oberstein.

"We set the objectives up pretty close to what they might encounter in Kosovo," said Command Sgt. Maj. William Gunter, 1-6th Infantry. The objectives were set up on private property to increase the real-

ism of the tasks they needed to accomplish. But the 501st Aviation Battalion did not just fly in and drop soldiers onto land belonging to private citizens. Much preparation went into setting up these scenarios that put soldiers on the ground for about 30 minutes. "We did a lot of work on this with the St. Wendel county commissioner, the mayor, range control, and the land owners," said Staff Sgt. Cash Freeman, 1-6 Infantry operations section. "They've all helped us extensively to pull this off."

Gunter echoed Freeman's words and added, "This exercise accomplished three things. The scenarios in the tactical portion are similar to what they may face when they deploy to Kosovo in December, so it provides soldiers with the training they need to accomplish their mission. The competition aspect of this exercise helps determine the readiness of the men and of course, we select the best squad in the battalion based on the results. The air support we received from the 501st Aviation Battalion helps the pilots and crew members prepare for their upcoming deployment to Kosovo."

Gunter summed up the exercise with, "All the training the soldiers receive here, in Grafenwöhr, and after Grafenwöhr will start coming together so they'll be a well honed and well oiled machine by the time they go into the Balkans."



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

After a punishing 12-mile road march toting a 40-pound rucksack, a soldier rests at the finish site and counts his blisters.

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Distance Learning brings education closer to home

By Jennifer R. Babich
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs

Military and civilian personnel in Baumholder and the surrounding vicinity no longer have to travel far from home to receive much of their job-related courseware. Instead, the courses can come to them at Baumholder's new Distance Learning Digital Training Facility, one of five such facilities in U.S. Army Europe and part of a growing number worldwide.

Located in the basement of a bunker that once housed a classified intelligence mission, the recently completed learning facility is turning an area once meant to contain information into a place to share information. Within its once closely guarded blast-proof walls, the facility now features three computer-equipped classrooms – each with 16 workstations, a small library, a conference room and office, a large break room and a modern kitchen.

But as facility manager Faith Aguillard points out, the most exciting thing about the facility is the opportunities it will provide to the personnel who will soon be filling the classrooms.

A major benefit of the distance learning program is its ability to provide Training and Doctrine Command courses to personnel without requiring them to leave home for "in-resident" instruction at a service or joint school. The result is a significant decrease in the amount of temporary duty required for military and civilian personnel to complete their training. "It just keeps them at home a little



Photo by Jennifer R. Babich

Digital Training Facility Manager, Faith Aguillard, reviews one of the courses now available at the new Distance Learning Center.

longer," Aguillard summarizes.

By providing instruction through such means as video tele-training, CD-ROM, computer-based training and text, Baumholder's facility allows personnel within a 50-mile radius to receive the same quality of instruction locally without the necessity of long-distance travel. A prime example of this is the battle-staff NCO course training, traditionally conducted from the US Army Sergeants Major Academy at Ft. Bliss, Texas. With the aid of the distance learning program, TDY time for the training can be reduced from six weeks and two days to just one week by allowing the classroom modules of the training to be conducted at the remote distance learning sites.

But the uses of the facility don't end there. Another form of training being offered by the distance learning facility is Common Task Training, in which basic skills are taught to soldiers. The availability of this training at the distance learning center allows soldiers to complete their annual qualification on these skills in a comfortable environment with a user-friendly program. The course program allows the soldier to interact with the instruction, and provides a convenient method for both training and testing. Additionally, the distance learning CTT course assists the trainer by providing an entire presentation, thus eliminating the need for instructors to create their own slide shows and training packets. It also allows for

an easy method to log the progression of students.

Yet another function of the new facility will be to offer SmartForce, the supplemental technical training on such computer-based programs as Microsoft, Lotus, Novell, and others. These self-development courses allow personnel to gain marketable computer skills while adding to their education records. "It's absolutely fabulous courseware," Aguillard enthusiastically states. "These are courses people pay thousands of dollars for, and soldiers get them for free."

While Baumholder's distance learning facility may have just opened its doors, both Aguillard and education services officer Steve Myers are already looking with

anticipation toward the future. With hopes of getting the system networked by the end of the summer, additional courseware will be available via the Internet. To further add to the center's ability to provide a well-rounded learning environment, they also want to establish a connection with the University of Maryland to provide post-secondary educational opportunities, particularly upper-level coursework. Other future options include providing a round-the-clock operating schedule and making video teleconferencing available to commanders, as well as the possibility of conducting Education Center cooking classes in the well-equipped kitchen.

As time passes, the center will continue to add to its already-growing list of available courses as they are released by the Training and Doctrine Command, eventually growing to include all of the proponent-type schools. Aguillard notes that the enrollment procedures for all the TRADOC courses will stay the same – students will simply report to the Distance Learning Facility for the classroom modules of the training.

With their grand opening and open house still to look forward to, both Aguillard and Myers echo the same sentiment about their new facility. "We're excited," they chime in together. When asked about her main goal for the facility, Aguillard's answer is simple – "to make sure every chair is always filled."

For more information, contact the Education Center at mil 485-6487 or the Distance Learning Facility at mil 485-8290.

Army takes care of its own with annual AER campaign

By Stephanie L. Fluellen
AER Officer

As the Army Emergency Relief Officer in Baumholder, I would like to extend my thanks to the community for its generosity during the recent AER Campaign.

Contributions to this year's

campaign exceeded \$52,000 for Baumholder, helping AER to help the Army take care of its' own: soldiers (active and retired) and family members (possessing valid ID cards). AER funds are raised through campaigns, and are all contributions. There are no government funds used to support this program.

AER is a private organization that was chartered in 1942 to assist soldiers in their time of emergency financial need, single and married. Funds can be dispersed in either a loan or a grant, depending on the situation.

Each case is treated as an individual case, and every case (even though they may be similar in na-

ture) is different.

AER is here to help whether it is sending a soldier home Under Emergency Conditions to helping a soldier repair an Essential Privately Owned Vehicle, from needing food to assisting with rent. It is governed by an Army Regulation that states what does and does not constitute an emergency.

In 1999, over \$515,000.00 was dispersed in loans and grants to help active duty soldiers and family members, retirees, and survivors of retirees in our communities during their time of need.

Thank you for helping us to be able to continue providing assistance to the best soldiers in the Army.

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Get a job at ACAP

The Army Career and Alumni Program is now accepting resumes for the position of ACAP Counselor at both the Baumholder and Kaiserslautern offices. This is a contractor position for current U.S. ID card holders. The position requires a master's degree, two years teaching or presentation experience, and computer literacy with Microsoft Word and the Internet. For detailed information call Bobbi Curris at 485-6741.

Don't let VA slip by

Summer is quickly slipping by and so is your chance for great information about your Veterans' Administration benefits. Currently, there is no permanently stationed VA representative in Germany, so don't miss this opportunity to learn about your Veteran's Administration benefits from a stateside VA representative.

The Army Career and Alumni Program will be hosting a Veterans' Administration briefing open to the public July 18 at 10:30 a.m. at the Baumholder ACAP office.

The VA briefing is just part of ACAP's mandatory Preseparation Briefing for all soldiers leaving the military.

If you are a soldier separating from the Army within six months to a year, or trying to decide whether or not to leave the Army, you need to begin the ACAP process this summer. Orders are not required to attend and going to an ACAP briefing does not mean that you have to get out of the Army if you change your mind at a later date. ACAP can help you decide if separating from the Army is in your best interest by reviewing your Army and VA benefits after separation, examining the current job market, and by assessing your job skills that transfer into civilian life.

Contact the ACAP office with any questions on the VA briefing or the Army transition process at mil 485-6330/6741 or civ(06783)6-6741/6330.

Transitioning soldiers and their family members can take advantage of the following ACAP classes scheduled for July and August:

Preseparation Briefing

July 18, 8:30 a.m. - noon (VA briefing at 10:30 a.m.)

Aug. 1, 8:30 a.m. - noon

Aug. 15, 8:30 a.m. - noon (VA briefing at 10:30 a.m.)

Aug. 29 at 8:30 a.m. - noon

Job Assistance Workshop

July 18, 1-4 p.m.; July 19, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Aug. 1, 1-4 p.m.; Aug. 2, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Aug. 15, 1-4 p.m.; Aug. 16, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Aug. 29, 1-4 p.m.; Aug. 30, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Post Notes

Spouses of soldiers leaving the Army are welcome and encouraged to attend all ACAP activities. For more information and to reserve a space for all classes, contact ACAP at mil 485-6741/6330 or civ(06783)6-6741/6330.

ACS at a glance

A newcomers coffee is scheduled from 9 to 11 a.m. July 4 in the Army Community Service lounge.

Army Community Service and the Baumholder Library are offering story hour for children in the morning. Story hours are offered 10 to 11 a.m., July 13 and 27 at the Baumholder Library. People who would like to be a guest reader may contact the ACS Outreach Program at mil 485-6252.

The International Spouses Club meets from 10 a.m. to noon July 5 and 19 in the Army Community Service lounge.

The next Level One Army Family Team Building class is July 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Call mil 485-8542 for location details.

Level Two training is scheduled for Aug. 23 and 24 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Level Three classes are set for July 19 and 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Commissaries close

The Baumholder, Idar-Oberstein and Neubrücke Commissaries will be closed on July 4 in observance of Independence Day.

Education update

The Baumholder Army Education Center and Army Learning Center will be closed July 3. No educational services will be available during that day.

Unit commanders, first sergeants and training NCOs, are you having difficulty filling your training needs? The Distance Learning Center, located in Building 8280 is now available for your use. This electronic classroom center has training programs available such as Common Task Training and Computer Based Training.

Smart Force Training is also available through CD-ROM. For more information and a tour of the new facility, call Faith Aguillard at mil 485-8290.

College classes are now available for units at a special time, such as, in between field training. Daytime, four-hour classes are offered for three weeks. For more information, call Bill Badger at mil 485-6487.

Central Texas College has the following openings at the Baumholder Education Center: Academic Instructor (tutor), evening hours. A bachelor of arts or science is required; FAST In-

structor, daytime classes, a bachelor of arts or science is required. Army Learning Center Operator (substitute), day and evening hours. Call mil 485-6487 for more information.

Boys of summer return

The 222nd Base Support Battalion Sports Office is dusting off home plate for a Fourth of July tournament that runs from July 1 through

4. Entry fee for this tournament is \$50 and those interested must register by June 23.

The 222nd BSB softball championship is July 24 through 27 and all teams are eligible.

Coming up in August is the 104th Area Support Group championship, scheduled for Aug. 4 through 6 at Wiesbaden. Two teams from each BSB will compete.

The season closes out with the U.S. Army Europe championship Aug. 18 through 20. Two teams will represent the 104th ASG.

For more information on the season schedule call mil 485-7176.

Rheinlander

Round up your runnin' buddies and start your weekend off at the BUB in the Rheinlander every Friday from 4 p.m.-midnight. Your favorite drinks and snacks are available.

The Rheinlander is also available for unit functions.

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